

Ben Bradlee's autobiographical A Good Life (Simon & Schuster, 1995) got about 2 1/2 pages in the Post's Style section 9/17/95. Most of the article is on the publication of The Pentagon Papers by the Post after the NY Times was ^{pro}hibited from publishing them. That was, without doubt, an act act of principle and of courage, a daring and a risky public service of great importance. As an editor Bradlee was a real pro in every way. The Post's Watergate reporting is another illustration of courage and principle. But in reporting Watergate the Post, which means Bradlee, was careful not to push for more than getting rid of Nixon. There was more it could have published that I gave it that it did not use, CIA involvements. While I have no knowledge I believe the thinking, whether or not Bradlee's, was that impeachment would be too hard on the country. And thus Reagan and Bush dared do what deserved impeachment and got away with it, disasterously for the country.

As I read the Post's ^article some ^{passages} reminded me of the past and I highlighted a couple of them. Speaking of publishing The Pentagon Papers:

"Not publishing the information when we had it would be like not saving a drowning man, or not telling the truth. Failure to publish without a fight would constitute an abdication that would brand the Post forever an Establishment tool of whatever administration was in power..."

"...Kathryn (Graham, ^{major} owner and publisher) had show guts and commitment to the First Amendment..."

"I wanted to publish because we had vital documents explaining the biggest story of the last ten years. That's what newspaper do: They learn, they report, they verify, they write and they publish."

When the Post (as did the NY Times) knew in advance of The Bay of Pigs and it was asked not to use the story, it killed that story. If it had paid any attention to the NY proceedings it would have gotten wind earlier. So, was it less "an Establishment tool" that it would have been with The Pentagon Papers? Or was with the assassination?

When I published Whitewash for general distribution in early May, 1966 I took copies to the Post. I also took and showed both managing editors, Bradlee and Al Friendly, the only and incomplete references ^{by the FBI} to the assassination in the five volumes of the special report on it ordered by LBJ the night of the assassination. Two sentences in five volumes! Without mentioning all the known wounds or the third man wounded and not even giving the cause of death!

That turned him on. A story on the book was assigned to Dan Kurzman. In a few days Kurzman told me, "Kid, you are in! It is a helluva book!"

Then it was decided to ask question of Howard Willens of the DJ criminal division and formerly No. 3 on the Commission staff. The Post liked him. I sat down in the

2
newsroom and typed a single page of question off the top of the head. Kurzman and

Larry Stern, a liberal reporter by reputation and an excellent reporter, saw and questioned Willens. When they returned Stern went in to see Bradlee and I think Friendly and Kurzman came to me and again said, "Kid, you are in! He had no answer for anything."

Kurzman had read the book and was ready to write. But the next time I was in he was no longer with the Post. I do not know that there is any connection and what I heard means there was no connection. I heard he had been given generous severance pay to leave and that he left over a story on the Dominican Republic, then run by the strong man Samozza.

Dick ^{Harwood} ~~Harwood~~, fresh from the Chicago Tribune, was in his place. He was not friendly. He is still with the Post and for some time had moved upward on it. When Harwood's story appeared it was run across the top of the front page and was long inside. Almost all on Epstein's Inquest. And his defense of the FBI.

To the Post this was no breach of faith.

The Post's then book-review editor, if I recall the name correctly, was Geoffrey Schmidt. He told me he'd read his copy, ^{and} liked it and was reviewing it. When it did not appear I went to his office. He was not in as I now recall but his secretary was. She told me he'd done a review praising the book and reporting some of its contents and that Bradlee had killed the review. The Bradlee explanation is that Schmidt did not know enough to read the book critically.

That must be true of all who do any reviews at all for the Post because none of my books has ever been reviewed in it. *As mentioned.*

Nor has any news story except on a reporter's initiative. No story has ever been assigned by any editor. For all the FOIA litigation I recall only two stories and I interested the reporters who covered ^{those} ~~any~~ court proceedings, each one time.

When I charged the FBI with perjury that was not newsworthy (nor was it to the NY Times, as Hedrick Smith told me, another in its Washington Bureau agreed with him.).

Most of the Post's critical stories on the House assassins were my idea and the Post and Gardner liked those ideas.

They've used me extensively and I've been willing and not misused or misquoted. All under ^{d/} Bradlee. Who was always friendly enough when he saw me in the newsroom. But I think his claim not to have been an Establishment tool is properly somewhat limited. *He did not include the assassination of the President who's been his friend.*

Jeffrey Frank of the Outlook staff gave the book review editor, Sunday, a copy of Case open. She did not use it. Nor has she NEVER AGAIN!

It also did not report our getting honorary degrees. *and so much else.*

HW 10/11/95